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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KCOR](#) [KDEM](#) [KCRM](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: IRAQI PARLIAMENTARIAN DENOUNCES CORRUPTION IN  
MINISTRIES

REF: A. BAGHDAD 441  
[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 120

Classified By: JOSEPH STAFFORD, ANTI-CORRUPTION COORDINATOR, REASON 1.4  
(B AND D)

CALL FOR MINISTERS' DISMISSAL OVER CORRUPTION  
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[1](#)1. (U) In a February 28 press statement, the chairman of the Council of Representatives' (COR) Integrity Committee, Sheikh Sabah, called for the removal of Trade Minister Abdel Falah Sudani as well as Labor and Social Affairs Minister Mahmud Radi because of the "growing corruption" in their ministries. Sheikh Sabah alleged that widespread corruption was resulting in the diversion of large amounts of funds allocated for the social welfare and food distribution programs administered, respectively, by the Labor and Social Affairs and Trade ministries. (NOTE: Ref a contains a recent media report of the recovery of 1.75 billion dinars -- approx. \$1.5 million -- in funds fraudulently obtained by Labor and Social Affairs ministry employees and retirees under the social welfare program. END NOTE) He went on to criticize the GOI for cutting the budgets of Iraq's anti-corruption institutions, citing the Commission on Integrity, in particular.

FURTHER CRITICISM OF THE GOI  
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[1](#)2. (U) Sheikh Sabah continued his anti-GOI criticism in a March 2 media pronouncement, asserting, "there is no state institution that is free of corruption." He went on to allege that besides Trade and Labor and Social Affairs, the most corrupt ministries included Defense, Interior, Oil, and Electricity. Sheikh Sabah criticized the Defense and Interior ministries for failing to comply with the COR's request that they provide details on large weapons contracts in 2008-09. He spoke disapprovingly of Prime Minister Maliki's "silence" in the aftermath of his (Sheikh Sabah's) call for the Trade and Labor and Social Affairs Ministers' removal.

COMMENT  
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[1](#)3. (C) It is hard to imagine Sheikh Sabah's call for the two Ministers' dismissal amounting to anything. Sheikh Sabah, a member of the shia-based Fadhila party, is known for his strong anti-GOI criticisms over corruption, but his and Fadhila's actual political weight, whether in the COR or otherwise, is limited -- all the more so following the party's unimpressive showing in the January 31 Provincial Council elections. The Trade Minister has been a favorite target of Sheikh Sabah's anti-GOI statements in the past (e.g., as reported in ref b), with the criticisms reflecting not only the widespread allegations of corruption besetting the Ministry's food distribution program, but also strains between Fadhila and Maliki's Dawa party. Accordingly, Sheikh Sabah's public swipe at Maliki in his latest public roadside

was not surprising and was consistent with previous  
utterances. END COMMENT  
BUTENIS